



**U.S. Department of Energy Environmental Impact
Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and
Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at
Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV**

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SCOPING COMMENT SHEET

Name: D. Cassandra Fletcher, Ph.D. Organization: N/A

Mailing Address: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number (Optional): _____

How did you hear about us?

Newspaper _____ Public meetings Other Limited coverage in Washington, DC newspapers
Neighbor _____ News coverage _____

If you want to receive information about the Rail Alignment Environmental Impact Statement by mail, please check here.

COMMENTS:

I do not feel that it is worthwhile to protest decisions by the federal government to fund and operate a nuclear waste repository in Yucca Mountain. After all, this project has proceeded like a giant steamroller in the face of years of legal, political, and individual citizen opposition. I expect the project to be completed, and a plan to be devised for getting the waste to its desert dump. My concerns are as follows:

(1) the majority of Nevadans who reside outside Las Vegas and Reno are in need of some kind of economic payoff for this project. Many have already been adversely affected by the decline in agriculture and mining, as well as battles over land (in the case of Native Americans) and water rights. It seems to me that even if the state of Nevada has heretofore resisted monies from the federal government

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as compensation, or as a form of quid pro quo, for taking full advantage of its ownership of 80% of state land to build the Yucca Mountain repository, the federal government should acknowledge the position of Nevadans, and respect their feelings, by establishing an interest-earning superfund, to be turned over for economic development in Nevada above and beyond this issue.

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This approach was adopted by the government in its disputes with the Western Shoshone nation which has argued its rights to land ownership in Nevada persistently and to no avail, but which now seems to be moving toward a compromise which will enable the natives to reap the benefits of the set-asides which the government initially offered them to purchase the lands to which they laid claim under the 1869 Treaty of Ruby Valley.

- (2) Little or no thought seems to be given to the realities of providing sufficient insurance to Nevadans so that they might be compensated in the event of what most fear from the Yucca Mountain project. Perhaps this concept is already in the works. If so, it has been little publicized. I think Nevadans ought to be the beneficiaries of free insurance coverage to guard their families and their property from harm due to accidents, or other exposure to radioactive waste, which might be occasioned by problems in transporting, storing, or moving objects per operators' requirements in the future. Since we bear considerable risk, we should be given the most consideration. If free insurance

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cannot be provided, we should at least receive low-cost insurance, comparable to what is offered for earthquake or floods.

(3) Doctors and nurses are fleeing Nevada in droves. This raises genuine concern about the state's preparedness to respond appropriately in case of emergency. The rural areas through which the proposed rail line will travel (whether inhabited by Nevadans of American or Native Americans) are clearly already underserved. What will be done about preparing first responders with specialties in emergency care in this particular field. What inducements will there be to provide enough medical personnel to the state in general, not to mention in the areas to be served by the proposed rail line.

(4) I would like to see more long-range planning to improve the abominable education system in Nevada. Most of the contractors and operators involved in various phases of the Yucca Mountain Project appear to come from outside the state. The government at federal, state, and local levels must get involved in a committed way to set up programs, and to offer training to young Nevadans, which will prepare them to work in, take ownership of, monitor and improve the technologies involved in making this endeavor work safely and effectively. By investing in an education which creates scientists, and not just casino dealers or tour operators, Nevadans might feel more vested in making Yucca Mountain not only a success, but

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the pride of the U.S.A. when it comes to safe nuclear waste disposal in a world where nuclear energy seems to be here to stay.

⑤ The immediate needs of many Nevadans, including newcomers such as myself, are ① for education about what we can realistically expect of our participation in hearings such as these, ② a better public relations effort from a government, a president, and a number of agencies (DOE, EPA, BLM) which have had historically high-handed, or just plain indifferent attitudes towards Nevadans. After all, it is the people of Nevada who have borne the brunt of radiation sickness (downwinders) and clusters of cancers (Fallon), along with Utahns and maybe New Mexicans. It seems an unfair burden to have to endure this kind of thing indefinitely. Let the people of Nevada know that they are valued for something other than nuclear tests, nuclear dumps, and military bases. Find ways to applaud the state for something other than gaming, shows, and vice.

⑥ Finally, I hope the alert system and emergency preparedness plans will be widely publicized. Your rail lines are going within 3-6 miles of small, inhabited towns and crossing a bridge is bound to be perilous (witness the recent problems in Golden, Colorado). So let us know, and be involved in whatever is in the works.

Thank you for allowing me, as a 6-months resident of Nevada,